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ART. II. — *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggj*, raccolte da M. GIOVAM-BATTISTA RAMUSIO, IV. vol., fol.; Venezia, appresso i Giunti; (tom. iii. MDLXV., MDCVI.)

GIOVANNI VERRAZZANO, the details of whose life, so far as they can be gathered, will form the subject of the present paper, was born of Pier Andrea da Verrazzano and Fiammetta Capelli, both citizens of Florence. Conjecture, as to his history, commences with his infancy; and it is only by a process of probable reasoning, that we can arrive at any conclusion even with regard to the year of his birth. The line of his ancestry is better known, and has been traced with a certain degree of evidence to an early part of the Middle Ages. Nor will it be uninteresting to add, that the family continued to our own day, having become extinct in the person of the Cavalier Andrea da Verrazzano, who died at Florence in the year 1819.

A highly probable conjecture of Pelli places his birth about the year 1485.* That his education was not neglected, is evident from his subsequent career; nor would it be going too far to say, that it must have corresponded in some respects to the rank and pretensions of a family, which counted among its ancestors some of the most distinguished men of the republic. However this may be, it would seem certain that the passion for adventure, to which he is indebted for his reputation, was manifested at an early period of his life. He resided several years at Cairo; but at what epoch, and for what purpose, cannot now be ascertained with certainty, although there can be but little doubt, that it was in the course of those commercial speculations, which led the Italians to establish themselves wherever these aims could be prosecuted to advantage. Whether also his travels in Egypt and in Syria were excursions made for the gratification of his curiosity, or in quest of gain; and whether they had any connexion with his residence at Cairo, or were undertaken at a previous or at a subsequent period, are questions, which, in order to refrain from venturing too far beyond the legitimate bounds of histor-

* "Non essendo nato Giovanni nel 1480, al tempo dell' ultimo catasto, per non vedersi in quello dato in *partata* dal Padre col restante della *famiglia*, e per crederlo in età capace di grandi imprese nel 1524, si potrà ragionevolmente dire nato circa il 1485." — *Elogj degli Illust. Toscani*. Tom. II. No. 30.

ical conjecture, we are constrained to pass over in silence. It is evident, however, from several allusions and comparisons in his letter to Francis, that, whatever may have been the nature of his travels by land, he had made more than one voyage in the Mediterranean ; and the rank to which he had attained in the service of France, as early as the year 1523, would naturally lead us to suppose, that these voyages had been attended with a certain share of success and distinction. How else can we account for his having been chosen, in an age that abounded with bold and skilful adventurers, to direct the first effort made by France in the career of maritime discovery ?

But such has been the fortune of Verrazzano, that here, where light first begins to break in upon his history, we find ourselves involved in a new question, with which the carelessness of a modern historian has encumbered a path already sufficiently intricate and obscure.

It has been confidently asserted, that Verrazzano made three voyages of discovery in the service of France. The first is said to have taken place in 1523 ; and the second in the following year. Of the third we shall have occasion to speak more fully in the sequel of our paper.

The supposition of the first voyage is founded upon the opening paragraph of his celebrated letter to the king of France. The author of this supposition is Charlevoix, who, as he quotes from Ramusio, would not seem to have derived his information from any other text of the letter of Verrazzano, than the copy which we still read in the collection of that editor. In this, according to the French historian, Verrazzano, supposing Francis to have been already informed of the success and the details of his voyage, simply states, that he had sailed from the port of Dieppe with four vessels, which he had succeeded in bringing back in safety to the same port ; from whence, continues Charlevoix, he started once more, in the month of January, 1525, upon a predatory excursion against the Spanish.*

* See Charlevoix, T. I. p. 41. We would here correct a slight error, which has inadvertently dropped from the pen of Mr. Bancroft. This gentleman says, (Hist. of the U. States, Vol. I. p. 17,) that "the Italian [Verrazzano] parting from a fleet, which had pursued a gainful commerce in the ports of Spain," &c. Verrazzano's own words are ; "*Avrà V. M. inteso il discorso facemmo con quelle armate in guerra per li lidi di Spagna,*" &c. ; Charlevoix, "*pour aller en course.*" This of course was not commerce, nor would the war which was then raging between their respective monarchs, admit of any amicable intercourse between France and Spain.

If, however, we turn to the letter of Verrazzano, we shall find that it reads very differently from the account thus given of it. He says, that, after the tempest which he had encountered on the northern coast, he had not written to the king concerning the vessels sent out upon discovery, supposing him to have been already informed of the manner, in which he had been impelled by the violence of the winds to take shelter in Brittany, with only two ships, the Dolphin and the Normandy; that he had there made the necessary repairs; that he had then made a predatory excursion along the coast of Spain; and, finally, that by a new arrangement, of which, also, he supposes the king to have been already informed, he had resolved to continue the first voyage with the Dolphin alone.

It will here be seen that Verrazzano, so far from saying any thing of his having returned to Dieppe, explicitly states, that he had been driven by the wind into a port of Brittany. The assertion of Charlevoix, therefore, that Verrazzano had successfully led his fleet back to Dieppe, is a flat contradiction of the passage which he cites. Thus the proof of the first voyage of Verrazzano is reduced to the first line of the paragraph in question, and the words *seguire la prima navigazione* ("continue the first voyage"), at the close of the same paragraph. After an attentive consideration of the whole passage, we have been unable to discover any thing in the language of it, which can justify the opinion of Charlevoix. Tiraboschi, with his usual acuteness, suggests that the voyage given out by the French historian as completed, may have been undertaken merely, and interrupted by the tempest alluded to in the paragraph which we have cited.* This suggestion, to which Tiraboschi was led by his critical sagacity alone, is confirmed by a passage in the letter of Carli,† who says, that when Verrazzano was driven back by the tempest, he was abandoned by one of his Florentine companions. The explanation of the whole paragraph is thus rendered natural and easy; and we are justified in concluding that the voyage actually accomplished by Verrazzano was, inasmuch as discovery was concerned, the continuation of an undertaking, whose commencement

* "Ma forse il primo fu solo tentato ed impedito dalla burrasca." Tiraboschi, Tom. VII. par. 1, p. 261.

† For an account of this letter, see the note on page 307.

dated further back than his departure from near the island of Madeira.*

We are at length upon sure ground. Verrazzano has told his own story, and with that unaffected simplicity which never fails to command belief. He sailed from a desert rock, near the island of Madeira, on the 17th of January, 1524, in the ship *Dolphin*, provisioned for eight months, well armed, and provided with those articles which experience had shown to be of value in an intercourse with the natives of the west. The *Dolphin* is described as but a caravel in burden; but this was an age in which the success of bold enterprises seems to have been calculated rather by the character of the men who conducted them, than by the fitness and extent of the means employed for their accomplishment.

Starting with the favor of a light but constant wind, he stretched boldly to the westward, with a slight northerly inclination in his course, and in the first twenty-five days had already sailed eight hundred leagues. On the 24th of February, he was assailed by a violent tempest, which his crowded caravel could hardly have weathered, unless guided by a bold and experienced mariner. For twenty-five days more he held his way with unwavering constancy, although evidently less favored by the wind, for in all this time he accomplished but half the distance of his first run. At length he came within sight of land, a long line of low coast stretching to the southward as far as eye could reach, and lighted by the blaze of innumerable fires. His first impulse was to land; and, after a fruitless search for some convenient harbour, he cast anchor off the shore, and landed in his boat. As he drew nigh to the beach, the timid natives hastily fled, stopping, however, from time to time, to gaze with expressions of savage wonder at their strange visitants. Curiosity soon got the bet-

* We subjoin the original paragraph, for the satisfaction of such of our readers, as may wish to examine the point for themselves. "Da poi la fortuna passata nelle spiagge settentrionali, Serenissimo Signore, non scrissi a vostra serenissima e cristianissima Maestà, quello che era seguito delli quattro legni, che quella mandò per lo oceano ad iscoprir nuove terre, pensando di tutto sia stata certifica come dalle impetuose forze de' venti fummo costretti, con sola la nave Normand ae Delfina afflitti, ricorrere in Brettagna, dove restaurati, avrà V. S. M. inteso il discorso facemmo con quelle armate in guerra per li lidi di Spagna, di poi la nuova disposizione con sola la Delfina in seguire la prima navigazione, dalla quale essendo ritornato, darò avviso a V. S. M. di quello abbiamo trovato."

We have followed in this extract the Magliabecchian manuscript. See note, p. 306.

ter of their apprehensions ; and, encouraged by the signs and gestures of the seamen, they returned towards them with demonstrations of wild delight, amazed at their dress and aspect, and eagerly pressing forward to point out the best place for landing. Nor was there less in the appearance of the natives, to excite the admiration of the Europeans. Naked, except at the waist, which was covered with skins and girdles of grass, interwoven with the tails of various animals, and at the head, which some wore decked with garlands of feathers, the darkness of their skins and of their thick hair seems to have set off, to the eyes of Verrazzano, their fine forms and striking features. He was strongly reminded of the East ; and traced out a resemblance between the natives of the two countries, which subsequent observations have partially confirmed. This first interview was confined to expressions of mutual wonder, and nothing occurred on either side to interrupt the harmony of the parties.

Pursuing his course northward, he continued to note with care every thing that the nature of his situation allowed him to observe. Not far from his first landing-place, he remarked another tribe, which, as near as he could judge, resembled the former in situation and appearance. The shore was covered with a fine sand, which formed a beach of nearly fifteen feet in breadth, and broken by small hillocks. Further on, the coast was indented with inlets and arms of the sea, and assumed, as he continued to advance, a richer and more winning aspect. Broad fields spread their verdant treasures before him ; and woods, more or less dense, displayed the variegated foliage of our American forests. He seems to have been overpowered with the beauty of the scene, and at a loss for words to describe it. "Think not," says he, "that they are like the Crimean forests, or the solitudes of Scythia, or the rigid coasts of the North, but adorned with palm trees, and cypress, and laurel, and species unknown to Europe, which breathe forth from afar the sweetest of odors." Nor is it surprising that his kindling imagination should have filled them with spices and aromatic liquors, and discovered traces of gold in the very color of the soil. The lakes and ponds of fresh water gave a new charm to the scenery, and his eye was caught with the wild fowl of various species that hovered around them. A mild and temperate climate, a serene sky, rarely and transiently tainted with vapors, and constantly re-

freshed by gentle western breezes, complete the enchanting picture which he has drawn of this region ; while a smooth sea, with a clear and tenacious bottom, seemed to combine security for the mariner with all the charms that attract the landsman.

The coast now verged more decidedly to the west. Yet no harbour was to be seen, and in order to obtain a supply of fresh water, of which he began to feel the want, Verrazzano was constrained to make one more attempt to land in his boat. He approached the shore, but could not reach it ; for the waves, rolling in with unbroken fury upon the open beach, rendered all access impracticable. To add to his embarrassment, the natives had assembled upon the beach, and seemed to invite him to land, with amicable gestures and expressions of curiosity and amazement. In order to make some reply to these friendly demonstrations, he ordered one of his men to swim as nigh to the shore as he dared, and endeavour to convey to the natives some of the toys which he thought would prove most acceptable to them. The sailor succeeded in conveying his precious burden to those for whom it was destined ; but, in endeavouring to return to the boat, was overpowered by the breakers and thrown breathless upon the sand. No sooner did the natives perceive his danger, than, hastening to his assistance, they drew him from the water, and raising him by the arms and legs, carried him higher up the beach. At this moment he recovered from his swoon, and becoming aware of his situation, began to cry aloud for help. To this the savages replied with cries no less vehement, and which probably would not have gone far towards removing his fears, if their actions had not speedily given him the best warrant of their good intentions. Placing him gently upon the ground, at the foot of a small hillock, they seemed for a moment to be lost in admiration of the whiteness and delicacy of his skin. A fire was soon kindled ; and, while his terror-stricken companions were every moment expecting to see him devoured under their very eyes, the kind-hearted natives proceeded to warm and restore him by its blaze. The impression which this act made upon Verrazzano and his crew may be easily imagined. We wish we could say, that it was properly rewarded. But many admire what they could never perform, and civilized man seems to have devised laws for his own guidance, of which he is unwilling to extend the advantage to barbarians.

Fifty leagues further to the North, Verrazzano again landed, and succeeded in penetrating nearly two leagues into the interior, with about twenty of his crew. The natives had fled to their forests ; but two, a young woman and an old one, less fortunate than the rest, were overtaken by the Europeans. The beginning of the interview was friendly, the latter offering them food, which was gladly accepted by the elder, but contemptuously rejected by her companion. The kidnapping of savages was too common an event to excite even a passing remorse in the mind of a seaman of that age ; and the occasion thus presented, too tempting to be neglected. They seized, therefore, upon the girl, and taking at the same time a boy of about eight years, who was hanging at the back of the old woman, began to retrace their steps towards the sea. Fortunately for the young savage, they were at a distance from the boat, and their way lay through woods, which increased both the danger and difficulty of their return. Nor was the girl disposed to submit tranquilly to her captors, but by the violence of her cries, and by her vigorous resistance, showed them, that it is often easier to attempt, than to accomplish an injustice. At last, wearied with the fruitless struggle, and perhaps not wholly free from the apprehension of danger from the natives, they released her and contented themselves with their less troublesome, though less valued prize, the boy.*

The remarks which Verrazzano made upon this part of the coast, and which were collected during the three days that his ship lay at anchor off the shore, give a favorable idea of his habits of observation, although they contain nothing which would now be thought worth preserving. We shall venture, however, to follow him on his visit to the harbours of New York and Newport.

A northwesterly course, which he pursued without variation for a hundred leagues, sailing only during the day and casting anchor at night, soon brought him to the shores of New Jersey. He here came upon a beautiful spot, situated among hills, through which a vast river rolled its waters towards the ocean. There was water enough, at its mouth, for a ship of any burden ; but he resolved to try the passage first in his boat. Rowing cautiously forward, he was soon

*This boy reached France in safety, as appears from the letter of Carli ; but we know not what became of him afterwards.

met by the natives, who, far from giving any signs of fear, advanced towards him with joyful gestures and shouts of admiration. Numbers also were hastening over from the opposite shore, and eagerly pressing forward to catch a sight of the strangers. But, in the midst of this novel scene, the wind, suddenly rising, began to blow with great violence ; and before he had penetrated beyond half a league into the *beautiful lake* (*bellissimo lago*), which seemed so inviting, he was compelled to return to his ship, and, weighing anchor, take his course eastward.

He passed Block Island, which struck him by its resemblance to the Island of Rhodes. This is the only spot which he speaks of as having named. He called it Louisa, in honor of the mother of his patron. Fifteen leagues more brought him to the harbour of Newport. He had not yet entered the port, when his vessel was surrounded by nearly thirty canoes, filled with wondering savages. At first, none ventured to approach the ship ; but, stopping at the distance of about fifty paces, they sat gazing in silent admiration at the strange objects, which had thus risen like magic before them. Then of a sudden, giving vent to their feelings, they broke out into a long shout of joy. The seamen, on the other hand, did all they could to win their confidence, and soon succeeded in alluring them sufficiently near, to catch the beads and bells and such like toys, which were thrown to them. At sight of these, every apprehension vanished, and, smiling as they contemplated them, they drew nigh and entered the ship. Among them were two kings, whose forms, if we may trust Verrazzano, were of the finest mould. One seemed to be about forty, the other, twenty-four years of age. The elder was arrayed in a robe of deer skins, skilfully wrought with rich embroidery. His head was bare, with the hair carefully tied behind. His neck was adorned with a large chain, set off with various-colored stones. The dress of the younger was nearly the same. The appearance of the people corresponded to the fine make of their sovereigns. Their complexion was remarkably clear ; their features regular ; their hair long, and dressed with no ordinary degree of care ; their eyes black and lively ; their whole aspect pleasing, and bearing a striking resemblance to that cast of countenance, which distinguishes the busts of the ancients. In short, to borrow the language of the discoverer, "they were the most beautiful

and genteel mannered people he had met with in all his voyage." Nor do the females seem to have appeared less lovely and winning, and, though viewed only at a distance, to have made a less favorable impression upon our mariners. Like the men, they were in part naked, and in part attired in highly ornamented skins. Their hair was studiously decked with ornamental braids, which were left free to fall upon the breast. Some wore rich skins upon their arms, and a certain distinction of dress seems to have been observed by those of different ages and conditions ; for the more advanced in years wore their hair like the females of Syria and of Egypt, and those who were married were distinguished by variously formed pendants in their ears. The natives seem moreover to have been fully sensible of the charms of their females ; for, although repeatedly asked and even urged to allow them to enter the ship, they could never be prevailed upon to consent, or trust them within reach of the Europeans. So that, while the males were amusing themselves on board, their wives and daughters were constrained to wait for them in their canoes, and could only gratify their curiosity by a distant view.

During a stay of more than fifteen days, Verrazzano continued his observations upon the country and its inhabitants. With regard to the latter, besides the qualities of which we have already spoken, he was particularly struck with their total ignorance of the value of gold, and the preference which they gave to beads and toys over more costly and useful objects. He made several excursions up Narragansett Bay, and examined it with considerable attention. To those who have traced the windings of its lovely shores, his rapturous descriptions will hardly seem exaggerated ; and, although the Indian canoe no longer sports upon its waters, and the woods which shaded its main land and islands have given place to the corn-field and the neat cottage of the husbandman, yet the eyes that have dwelt on them through the first years of life, will scarcely fail to recognise, even in their present form, the original outlines of his glowing picture.

His voyage was now drawing to a close. On the 6th of May, he bade adieu to the friendly natives of Rhode Island, and, coasting along towards the north, explored, without landing, an extent of two hundred leagues. The spot, where he now cast anchor, seemed the reverse of all those which he had hitherto visited. The woods were dense, and filled with

the trees of a colder climate ; the soil barren, or barely yielding a scanty supply of roots. The inhabitants, also, clothed in the skins of wolves and bears, seemed to share in the rugged nature of the land in which they dwelt. They repulsed every attempt at friendly intercourse, and held no further communication with the ship than was necessary, in order to secure the exchange of some of their own commodities for the hooks and knives and sharpened steel of the strangers. Nor did they go to the ship or suffer the seamen to land to carry on their bargain ; but, standing upon the rocks, they passed the articles of exchange backwards and forwards by a long cord, and, as soon as the trade was completed, hastened back to their woods. In spite of this threatening reception, Verrazzano landed, penetrated several miles into the country, examined some of the huts of the natives, and succeeded in forming some idea of their condition and manner of life. On his return, they followed close upon his track, discharging their arrows, and venting their hostility in wild cries of impotent rage.

Leaving this inhospitable shore, the intrepid navigator still continued onward, following the line of the coast, till within nearly the fiftieth degree of northern latitude. Thirty-two islands, all lying near to the shore, were discovered in the course of fifty leagues. The ports and passages, formed by their juxtaposition, reminded him of the Adriatic along the coast of Dalmatia. His provisions now began to fail, and a broad space of unknown sea still separated him from France. The object of his voyage had been in a great measure accomplished. He had discovered above seven hundred leagues of a new world, and held sufficient communication with the inhabitants to enable him to form some idea of their state and character. Yielding to these considerations, he bore away for Europe. His passage was prosperous ; and he entered the port of Dieppe early in the month of July, 1524, about five months and a half from the day of his departure from the rock near Madeira.

He now hastened to transmit to the king a full narrative of his voyage. This forms the celebrated letter to Francis First, the only authentic document concerning Verrazzano, which has reached us. And Ramusio, to whom we are indebted for the preservation of it, says, that, even in his time, nothing else relative to him could be found, all having perished during the

last fatal wars of Florence. Enough, however, is contained in this letter, to give a general idea of the character of the writer, and enable us to form a tolerable estimate of his qualifications for the hazardous career in which he was engaged.

That he was possessed of the first and most important of these, firmness and modest courage, is sufficiently evident from the whole tenor of his narrative. And the tone of this production is so peculiar and so strikingly characteristic, that the author, without once speaking of himself, and without seeking, either directly or indirectly, to give weight to his own acts and opinions, leaves upon the mind of the reader a distinct and lively impression of the superiority of the individual, whose exploits he is studying. He was occasionally led away by the prevailing passion of the age, and predisposed to discover qualities in the soil and nature of the countries he discovered, which were not always warranted by the actual appearance of them ; yet there is a general air of exactness in his remarks, and a tact in seizing upon the most striking features in the aspect as well of the country as of its inhabitants, which would justify us in attributing to him no common powers of observation. He makes no attempts at combining his scattered remarks into a systematic description,—that species of combination which affords the best proof of a philosophic mind, when supported by a broad basis of facts, and of a superficial one, when that basis is neglected. There are only one or two instances, also, where he indulges in the habit, so common to travellers, of making use of that which they see and hear, in order to discover a thousand things which they can neither see nor hear ; of perverting those analogies, which are so sure when applied to nature, and so uncertain when applied to man, unless the application be accompanied by a perfect knowledge of all the circumstances which vary and modify our nature in every form of society. He writes as a European, and consequently employs terms, that are not always adapted to the state of society which he describes. His kings are represented as surrounded by their gentlemen of attendance ; the queen, by her ladies. These, however, are but words, and their import is corrected by the whole tenor of the passages in which they are found. He evidently aims at nothing more, than a plain and faithful description of what he had done and seen.

The letter closes with a cosmographical exposition of his

voyage. From this we learn with what views he actually set out, and in what manner he had reasoned upon those wonderful discoveries which had produced so complete a revolution in the science of geography. The discovery of a passage to Cathay was the end that he proposed to accomplish ; and, though he was already convinced, that Europe and Asia were separated towards the west by a vast tract of intervening land, yet he felt equally sure that some strait must necessarily open a passage through it to India. He enters upon this disquisition with the zeal of a man confident in the soundness of his theories ; and, as the voyage which he had completed was but a prelude to the greater undertakings which he had projected, he endeavours, by the exactness and fulness of his reasoning, to inspire his patron with the same feelings. The minute details and observations, of a character more strictly professional, had been carefully noted in another work, to which he refers for a fuller view of his nautical system. This work has unfortunately shared in the fate of all that belonged to Verrazzano, either having perished with its author, or being lost among the confused miscellanies of some French or Italian library.

The return of the successful navigator was hailed with the warmest expressions of joy. All hopes of again seeing him had long been given over ; and many had lamented, and still more had blamed, the temerity, which had exposed him to a wretched death among the frozen waters of the Northern ocean. But no sooner was it known, that he had not only arrived in safety, but had actually succeeded in discovering an extensive tract of land, till then unknown even to the boldest navigators of the age, than he was greeted as a man of the highest powers, and worthy to be classed with the first members of his profession. The cupidity of commerce, also, was suddenly awakened. The result of his interview with the king was looked for with the greatest anxiety. Scarce any doubt was entertained concerning the success of his representations, or that he would be immediately despatched to prosecute his undertaking, with means better proportioned to its magnitude and importance. The merchants of Lyons were already revelling in visions of the wealth, that was to pour in upon them from these new sources.

Whether, however, another voyage ever took place, or whether the plans of Verrazzano and his friends were

thwarted by some sudden change in the feelings of Francis, or by the disasters which followed the fatal battle of Pavia, are questions around which historians have drawn so thick a veil of doubts and contradictions, that it would be impossible to fix upon any opinion, that should appear equally satisfactory to all classes of readers. But, as all our knowledge of the rest of the life of Verrazzano is wholly dependent upon the solution of this question, we shall endeavour to state, as clearly and succinctly as is compatible with the nature of the subject, the principal points at issue, and the result of our own inquiries.

Ramusio, a contemporary of Verrazzano, to whose care, as has already been said, we are indebted for the preservation of the only authentic document that we possess concerning him, positively asserts, that he set out a second time, in order to pursue his discoveries in the west.* The course and details of this voyage are not given; but in Ramusio's time it was generally believed, that Verrazzano, upon landing on the coast, was overpowered by the natives, and eaten within sight of his companions. The scene of this horrid event is not known; but the ship must have returned, or how could the fatal tidings have reached France? Such was the contemporary belief concerning the death of Verrazzano. The fate of Magellan and that of Cortoreal add not a little to its probability.

This statement is contradicted by Charlevoix, who, however, rejects only one part of it, the tragic end of Verrazzano.† He acknowledges that a second voyage was undertaken; but says that nothing more was ever heard of the ship or of its crew. He gives it out also as certain, that the mysterious fate of Verrazzano long deterred the French from making any new attempts in the career which he had opened.

The next story is that advanced by the author of the *Chronological Essay on the History of Florida*.‡ This writer asserts, but upon what grounds it would be difficult to guess, that Verrazzano was taken by the Baskians in 1524, carried by them first to Seville, thence to Madrid, and there hanged.

* Ramusio. Tom. III. p. 438.

† Charlevoix, Tom. I. *ut supra*.

‡ This work we have not seen, but quote from Tiraboschi. Vol. VII. p. 262. His quotation also appears to have been taken at second hand; but it is acknowledged that the author brings no proof in confirmation of his assertion, a circumstance, which, in treating of facts so remote, and so variously related, would of itself be sufficient to cast strong suspicion upon his testimony.

The most serious objection to the account given by Ramusio was advanced by Tiraboschi, in the short account of the life of Verrazzano, which he has inserted in the seventh volume of his *History of Italian Literature*. It is founded upon a passage in one of the letters of Hannibal Caro, which had until then escaped the attention of all who had engaged in this obscure subject. The letter is addressed from Castro to the members of the household of Monsignor de' Gaddi; and contains a humorous account of a journey which Caro was then making.* Addressing the different members of the family in turn, he proceeds thus; "As for you, Verrazzano, a discoverer of new worlds and their wonders, I cannot as yet tell you any thing worthy of your map, for we have not thus far passed through any country, which had not been already discovered by you or by your brother." From this remarkable passage, Tiraboschi conjectures, that Giovanni himself, and not his brother, a person wholly unknown to the writers of the age, was the person addressed; that, having been badly rewarded for his services to France, he had been constrained to seek a sustenance by taking service in the family of Bishop Gaddi; and that consequently the statement of Ramusio, is incorrect; or that the second voyage of which he speaks, took place much later than was generally supposed. He adds, however, that the uncertainty which hangs over the life of Verrazzano is so great, as to render it impossible to come to any satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. Bancroft seems to have adopted the former of Tiraboschi's conjectures.† The passage, from an early work of

* "Delle Lettere Familiari del com. Annibal Caro." Venetia, 1587, appresso Bernardo Giunti. Tom. I. pp. 6, 7.

† "History of the United States, Vol. I. p. 20. In a note to the same page, Mr. Bancroft quotes a passage from Tiraboschi, (Vol. VII. pp. 261, 262,) referring to a cosmographical narration of Verrazzano, preserved in manuscript in the Strozzi Library at Florence, and expresses a wish that a copy may be obtained for the collections of the New York Historical Society. The Strozzi Library is no longer in existence; but the manuscripts of that collection passed into the hands of the Tuscan government, and were divided between the Magliabecchian and Laurentian libraries of Florence. The historical documents were deposited in the former. Among them was the cosmographical narration of Verrazzano, mentioned by Tiraboschi, upon the authority, as we should suppose, of Pelli. It is contained in a volume of Miscellanies, marked "Class XIII. Cod. 89. Verraz."; and forms the concluding portion of the letter to Francis the First, which is copied at length in the same volume. It is written in the common running hand of the sixteenth century, (*carrattere*

Hakluyt, which he quotes from the recent Memoirs of Cabot, would seem to give grounds for a new supposition. But, as we have not been any more fortunate than Mr. Bancroft, in

corsivo), tolerably distinct, but badly pointed. The whole volume, which is composed of miscellaneous pieces, chiefly relating to contemporary history, is evidently the work of the same hand.

Upon collating this manuscript with that part of the letter which was published by Ramusio, we were struck with the differences in language, which run through every paragraph of the two texts. In substance there is no important difference, except in one instance, where by an evident blunder of the transcriber *bianchissimo* is put for *bronzina*. There is something so peculiar in the style of this letter, as it reads in the manuscript of the Magliabecchian, that it is impossible to account for its variations from Ramusio, except by supposing that this editor worked the whole piece over anew, correcting the errors of language upon his own authority.* These errors indeed are numerous, and the whole exhibits a strange mixture of Latinisms and absolute barbarisms, with pure Tuscan words and phrases. The general cast of it, however, is simple and not unpleasing. The obscurity of many of the sentences is in a great measure owing to false pointing.

The cosmographical description forms the last three pages of the letter. It was doubtless intentionally omitted by Ramusio, though it would be difficult to say why. Some of the readings are apparently corrupt; nor, ignorant as we are of nautical science, was it in our power to correct them. There are also some slight mistakes, which must be attributed to the transcriber.

A letter, which follows that of Verrazzano, gives, as it seems to us, a sufficient explanation of the origin of this manuscript. It was written by a young Florentine, named Fernando Carli, and is addressed from Lyons to his father in Florence. It mentions the arrival of Verrazzano at Dieppe, and contains several circumstances about him, which throw a new though still a feeble light upon some parts of his history, hitherto wholly unknown. It is by the discovery of this letter, that we have been enabled to form a sketch of him, somewhat more complete than any which has ever yet been given.

The history of both manuscripts is probably as follows. Carli wrote to his father, thinking, as he himself tells us, that the news of Verrazzano's return would give great satisfaction to many of their friends in Florence. He added at the same time, and this also we learn from his own words, a copy of Verrazzano's letter to the king. Both his letter and his copy of Verrazzano's were intended to be shown to his Florentine acquaintances. Copies, as is usual in such cases, were taken of them; and to us it seems evident that, from some one of these, the copy in the Magliabecchian manuscript was derived. The appearance of this last, which was prepared for, if not by, some individual fond of collecting miscellaneous documents, is a sufficient corroboration of our statement.

The libraries of Florence contain nothing further relative to Verrazzano. We have examined the Magliabecchian, the Laurentian, the Palatine, and that of the Academy of Fine Arts.

Neither could we discover any thing concerning him, among the printed works of the Riccardian. The arrangement of the miscellaneous manuscripts in this last, of which there is no index, made it impossible to ascertain any thing with regard to their contents, without carrying our

* He did so also with the translation of Marco Polo. See Apostolo Zeno, Annot. alla Bib. Ital. del Fontanini. Tom. II. p. 300; ed. di Parma. 1804.

our attempts to get a sight of this work of Hakluyt, it is not in our power to judge how much credit may be due to it, or how far it may be reconcilable with the account of Ramusio.

Each of these statements will doubtless seem more or less probable to different readers, according to their particular manner of weighing historical evidence. There are difficulties in all, which no process can reconcile, and which, whatever view we take of the subject, can hardly be gotten over. Yet on the other hand, so many circumstances seem to concur in favor of one statement and against all the others, that it is almost impossible to refrain from leaning decidedly towards it.

The author of the Chronological Essay upon the History of Florida has not, as far as we have been able to ascertain, found a single follower. It may be said of Charlevoix, that the whole of that part of his work which relates to Verrazzano, is exceedingly inaccurate and fanciful. He not only misrepresents his language, but, with the letter to Francis before him, gives a wrong date to the voyage, placing it a year later than it really took place, and making Verrazzano guilty of the extravagance of addressing himself to Francis for encouragement, at a time when that monarch was a prisoner in the hands of the Spanish, uncertain and anxious for his own fate. Neither does he pretend to tell us why, or by what authority, he so boldly rejects the narrative of Ramusio. He even attributes the interruption of the French voyages of discovery to the terror inspired by the fate of Verrazzano ;

researches further than circumstances would warrant. The private libraries to which we have had access are equally deficient in all notices of this unfortunate man ; and Ramusio was doubtless in the right, when he said, that all but the letter to Francis had been lost.

As the family of Verrazzano has but recently become extinct, it was natural to suppose, that the best chance for discovering something more complete, or more positive, concerning the existence of other documents, would be by ascertaining what was contained in the family library. This we were enabled to do, by the kindness of the gentleman by whom it was arranged previous to its being sold, and whose passion for bibliography had led him to examine every part of it with minute attention. All, however, that was found in it relative to Giovanni, was a manuscript bound up in the family copy of Ramusio, and a few loose papers. These last add nothing to what was already known. The former was purchased by Captain Napier, R. N., and is now in England. We presume that it is nothing more than a copy of the abovementioned cosmographical description, or perhaps of the whole letter, from the Magliabecchian manuscript. Should the present paper chance to meet the eye of Captain Napier, we trust that his well-known passion for Italian history will lead him to favor the public with a description of his manuscript, if, contrary to what we have reason to believe, it contains any notices as yet unpublished.

and, although this forms one of those pretty chains of cause and effect, with which some historians are fond of adorning their pages, yet for those who are disposed to believe it, it may not be useless to observe, that this part, at least, applies equally well to Ramusio's account of the common belief of his age.

The passage, which we have cited from the letters of Caro, is, as far as we know, the only argument that can be reasonably urged against the current tradition. But even this admits of an explanation; nor do we see the necessity of adopting the conjecture of Tiraboschi, although his authority be of the highest order.

In the first place, the second conjecture of this acute critic, namely, that the last voyage of Verrazzano was subsequent to his residence in Rome, may be easily reconciled with the account given by Ramusio, who does not attempt to fix the date of this voyage. This, however, we must confess, seems highly improbable; nor would it be so easy to account for the long silence in which Verrazzano was lost, during the thirteen years which had elapsed between his first voyage and the writing of Caro's letter. It seems far more probable, that he was immediately despatched upon his second expedition, while the enthusiasm excited by the first was still warm, and before Francis had advanced into Italy upon his unfortunate attack on the Duchy of Milan. Verrazzano returned to France in July; we learn by the letter of Carli, that he was expected at Lyons in August; Francis entered Italy near the beginning of October, and his progress there was successful up to the 24th of February, in the following year, (1525,) on which day he was defeated and made prisoner in the battle of Pavia.* Thus there was time enough to have fitted out a small fleet, long before this last event; nor was any thing more natural for a monarch like Francis, than to continue, during the exuberance of spirits produced by his own success, a career of adventure which promised such happy results to his kingdom. The representations also of the merchants of Lyons, who, as we learn from the letter of Carli, were anxious to open, by means of Verrazzano, a communication with the lands which he had discovered, must have had some weight with the King, even if success had not always been, with Fran-

* Robertson, "Charles V." Book IV. Guicciardini, Lib. XV. Cap. 5.

cis, a sufficient motive for engaging in enterprises far more hazardous and difficult. Nor was the honor, which would redound to him from the subjection of distant territories, a slight consideration with one so full of the conceits of ancient chivalry ; nor the hope of sharing or eclipsing, in this new world, the glory of the Emperor, whose throne received such lustre from his vast possessions in the west, a prospect likely to escape the attention of a sovereign, whose whole life was one long contest with his hated rival. In short, there are, in the personal character of Francis and his subjects, and in the state of his affairs at the return of Verrazzano, so many reasons why the second voyage should have been immediately undertaken, that we know not how to refuse our belief to the contemporary writers who say that it was.

The chief difficulty that remains, consists in the appellation of "discoverer" as applied to the brother of Verrazzano. But this is not so great, as would at first appear. In whatever way we read the passage, both as it stands in the edition cited by Tiraboschi and in the one before us, we must extend the honor of the title to both of the brothers. Giovanni was undoubtedly the most celebrated ; and, as in the case of the Cabots, the glory of one member of the family may have thrown a shade over that of the other. But we can see no reason for supposing, upon the ground taken by Tiraboschi,* that no other than Giovanni can be here spoken of, when the appellation which should distinguish him is applied indiscriminately to both. Nor does it seem a slight confirmation of this view, that the active life, hitherto led by Giovanni, would hardly have admitted of his settling down in quiet indolence, among the attendants of a churchman, while the spirit of adventure was still in vigor in almost every part of Europe ; although, on the contrary, the knowledge of the horrid fate of a brother would naturally account for the abandonment of his profession by the individual, whose residence at Rome is placed beyond all doubt by the testimony of Caro.

It would be superfluous to add, that we feel strongly dis-

* "Che non siano state scoperte da voi o da vostro fratello." If the *o* were changed into *e*, Tiraboschi's conclusion would seem to be a necessary consequence of the passage ; but, as it now reads, and we have consulted more than one edition, it seems evident, that each of the brothers is meant to be spoken of, as an original discoverer. That the name of the person addressed should stand first, is but a common form of epistolary courtesy.

posed to accept the statement of Ramusio. Apart from its claims to belief as the current contemporary tradition, it should be observed, that it is not given with that appearance of indecision, with which a candid historian qualifies the narration of uncertain events, but with that simple exactness with which we repeat a notorious and well-authenticated fact. When, moreover, we consider the zeal, with which Ramusio devoted the greater part of a long life to the subject of maritime discovery ; the opportunities which he enjoyed of deriving his information from personal friends of Verrazzano ; his extensive correspondence with some of the most distinguished navigators, as well as with many of the first literary men of the age ; and that his celebrated collection was made at no greater distance than Padua, where nothing short of the grossest negligence could have kept him in ignorance of the existence of Verrazzano, at Rome, but a few years previous, and in the family of a well-known prelate ; the evidence in favor of his correctness seems to be placed beyond all doubt.

Yet, in spite of the concurrence of so many circumstances, there are still doubts, arising from various trifling incidents connected with the history of Verrazzano, which constrain us to confess, that, while grasping at conviction, we have obtained nothing but uncertain, though perhaps probable conjectures. All that we know with certainty, is, that one great action distinguished him from the mass of adventurers, in an age which had produced a Columbus and a Cabot ; while doubt and mystery have enveloped the rest of his career, leaving us uncertain whether we should lament the untimely fate which gave him a prey to the barbarous appetite of cannibals, or execrate the ingratitude which compelled him to sacrifice to a struggle with the daily necessities of life, a mind formed for daring and successful adventure.
